

IN THE CLAIMS:

Please cancel claims 1 – 69 without prejudice or disclaimer of the subject matter thereof
and add new claims as follows.

--1 – 69. (Canceled).

1 70. (New) A thermal treatment system for thermally treating medical items to desired
2 temperatures, wherein said medical items include a particular temperature range for utilization
3 and a prescribed time interval for thermal treatment, said thermal treatment system comprising:

4 a thermal treatment unit to thermally treat at least one medical item disposed within said
5 system;

6 a temperature sensor associated with said at least one medical item to measure
7 temperature of said at least one medical item;

8 a timer to measure at least a residence time within said system for said at least one
9 medical item; and

10 a monitor unit to control thermal treatment of said at least one medical item and to
11 monitor said temperature and said residence time of said at least one medical item for
12 compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said thermal treatment time
13 interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 71. (New) The system of claim 70 further including a display to display at least one
2 of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said desired temperature and said residence time
3 for said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 72. (New) The system of claim 70 further including an input device to facilitate entry
2 of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment time interval for each medical
3 item disposed within said system.

1 73. (New) The system of claim 70 further including at least one indicator to indicate
2 occurrence of a particular condition to a user.

1 74. (New) The system of claim 73, wherein said indicator includes at least one of a
2 visual indicator and an audio indicator.

1 75. (New) The system of claim 73, wherein said condition includes reduction in
2 medical item efficacy indicated by a measured temperature of a medical item exceeding a
3 corresponding utilization temperature range.

1 76. (New) The system of claim 73, wherein said condition includes a residence time
2 within said system of a medical item exceeding a corresponding thermal treatment time interval.

1 77. (New) The system of claim 70 further including an item sensor to detect when at
2 least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs within said system.

1 78. (New) The system of claim 77 further including an item indicator to indicate to a
2 user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

1 79. (New) The system of claim 70, wherein said thermal treatment unit includes a
2 heating device to heat said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 80. (New) The system of claim 70 further including a thermal indicator to indicate to
2 a user prior thermal treatment of said at least one medical item.

1 81. (New) A thermal treatment system for thermally treating medical items to desired
2 temperatures, wherein said medical items include a particular temperature range for utilization
3 and a prescribed time interval for thermal treatment, said thermal treatment system comprising:

4 a thermal treatment unit to thermally treat at least one medical item disposed within said
5 system;

6 an item sensor to detect the presence of said at least one medical item within said system;
7 and

8 a monitor unit to determine when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item
9 occurs within said system and to control thermal treatment of said at least one medical item.

1 82. (New) The system of claim 81 further including:

2 a temperature sensor associated with said at least one medical item to measure
3 temperature of said at least one medical item; and

4 a timer to measure at least a residence time within said system for said at least one
5 medical item;

6 wherein said monitor unit monitors said temperature and said residence time of said at
7 least one medical item for compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said
8 thermal treatment time interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 83. (New) The system of claim 82 further including a display to display at least one
2 of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said desired temperature and said residence time
3 for said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 84. (New) The system of claim 82 further including at least one indicator to indicate
2 occurrence of at least one of a reduction in medical item efficacy indicated by a measured
3 temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature range and a
4 residence time within said system of a medical item exceeding a corresponding thermal
5 treatment time interval.

1 85. (New) The system of claim 81 further including an input device to facilitate entry
2 of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment time interval for each medical
3 item disposed within said system.

1 86. (New) The system of claim 81 further including an item indicator to indicate to a
2 user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

1 87. (New) The system of claim 81, wherein said thermal treatment unit includes a
2 heating device to heat said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 88. (New) The system of claim 81 further including a thermal indicator to indicate to
2 a user prior thermal treatment of said at least one medical item.

1 89. (New) A thermal treatment system for thermally treating medical items to desired
2 temperatures, wherein said medical items include a particular temperature range for utilization
3 and a prescribed time interval for thermal treatment, said thermal treatment system comprising:

4 a thermal treatment unit to thermally treat at least one medical item disposed within said
5 system; and

6 a monitor unit to determine prior thermal treatment of said at least one medical item and
7 to control thermal treatment of said at least one medical item.

1 90. (New) The system of claim 89 further including:

2 a temperature sensor associated with said at least one medical item to measure
3 temperature of said at least one medical item; and

4 a timer to measure at least a residence time within said system for said at least one
5 medical item;

6 wherein said monitor unit monitors said temperature and said residence time of said at
7 least one medical item for compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said
8 thermal treatment time interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 91. (New) The system of claim 90 further including a display to display at least one
2 of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said desired temperature and said residence time
3 for said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 92. (New) The system of claim 90 further including at least one indicator to indicate
2 occurrence of at least one of a reduction in medical item efficacy indicated by a measured
3 temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature range and a
4 residence time within said system of a medical item exceeding a corresponding thermal
5 treatment time interval.

1 93. (New) The system of claim 89 further including an input device to facilitate entry
2 of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment time interval for each medical
3 item disposed within said system.

1 94. (New) The system of claim 89 further including an item sensor to detect when at
2 least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs within said system.

1 95. (New) The system of claim 94 further including an item indicator to indicate to a
2 user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

1 96. (New) The system of claim 89, wherein said thermal treatment unit includes a
2 heating device to heat said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 97. (New) A method of thermally treating medical items to desired temperatures,
2 wherein said medical items include a particular temperature range for utilization and a prescribed
3 time interval for thermal treatment, said method comprising:

4 (a) thermally treating at least one medical item disposed within a thermal treatment
5 system;
6 (b) measuring at least a temperature of said at least one medical item and a residence
7 time within said thermal treatment system for said at least one medical item; and
8 (c) monitoring said temperature and said residence time of said at least one medical
9 item for compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said thermal treatment
10 time interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 98. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein step (c) further includes:
2 (c.1) displaying at least one of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said
3 desired temperature and said residence time for said at least one medical item disposed within
4 said system.

1 99. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein step (a) further includes:
2 (a.1) facilitating entry of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment
3 time interval for each medical item disposed within said thermal treatment system.

1 100. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein step (c) further includes:
2 (c.1) indicating occurrence of a particular condition to a user.

1 101. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein step (c.1) further includes:

2 (c.1.1) indicating occurrence of a reduction in medical item efficacy indicated by a
3 measured temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization temperature
4 range.

1 102. (New) The method of claim 100, wherein step (c.1) further includes:
2 (c.1.1) indicating occurrence of a residence time within said thermal treatment system of
3 a medical item exceeding a corresponding thermal treatment time interval.

1 103. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein step (c) further includes:
2 (c.1) determining when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs
3 within said thermal treatment system.

1 104. (New) The method of claim 103, wherein step (c) further includes:
2 (c.2) indicating to a user at least one of said medical item insertion and removal.

1 105. (New) The method of claim 97, wherein step (a) further includes:
2 (a.1) heating said at least one medical item disposed within said system.

1 106. (New) A method of thermally treating medical items to desired temperatures,
2 wherein said medical items include a particular temperature range for utilization and a prescribed
3 time interval for thermal treatment, said method comprising:
4 (a) thermally treating at least one medical item disposed within a thermal treatment
5 system; and

6 (b) determining when at least one of insertion and removal of a medical item occurs
7 within said thermal treatment system and indicating to a user at least one of said medical item
8 insertion and removal.

1 107. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.1) measuring at least a temperature and a residence time within said thermal
3 treatment system for said at least one medical item; and

4 (b.2) monitoring said temperature and said residence time of said at least one medical
5 item for compliance with said particular utilization temperature range and said thermal treatment
6 time interval in order to maintain medical item efficacy.

1 108. (New) The method of claim 107, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.3) displaying at least one of an insertion time, said measured temperature, said
3 desired temperature and said residence time for said at least one medical item.

1 109. (New) The method of claim 107, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.3) indicating occurrence of at least one of a reduction in medical item efficacy
3 indicated by a measured temperature of a medical item exceeding a corresponding utilization
4 temperature range and a residence time within said thermal treatment system of a medical item
5 exceeding a corresponding thermal treatment time interval.

1 110. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein step (a) further includes:

2 (a.1) facilitating entry of at least one of a desired temperature and a thermal treatment
3 time interval for each medical item disposed within said thermal treatment system.

1 111. (New) The method of claim 106, wherein step (a) further includes:

2 (a.1) heating said at least one medical item disposed within said thermal treatment
3 system.

1 112. (New) A method of thermally treating medical items to desired temperatures,
2 wherein said medical items include a particular temperature range for utilization and a prescribed
3 time interval for thermal treatment, said method comprising:

4 (a) receiving at least one medical item for thermal treatment; and
5 (b) indicating to a user prior thermal treatment of said at least one medical item.

1 113. (New) The method of claim 112, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.1) measuring a temperature of said at least one received medical item, wherein said
3 temperature indicates said prior thermal treatment.

1 114. (New) The method of claim 113, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.2) measuring at least a residence time within a thermal treatment system for said at
3 least one received medical item, wherein said residence time indicates said prior thermal
4 treatment.

1 115. (New) The system of claim 114, wherein step (b) further includes:

2 (b.3) displaying at least one of said measured temperature and said residence time for
3 said at least one received medical item.--